

MARK TWAIN'S APOLOGY.

Why He Could Not Accept an Invitation to Dinner.

During a recent warm discussion between the Catholics and the Protestants of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Miss Mary Kyle, a lady who had always taken deep interest in religious matters, conceived a brilliant idea as to how these differences between the denominations could be amicably settled. Believing that the only way by which this end could be accomplished would be to have the ministers and master minds of the country assemble at a large dinner, and discuss at the same time religion and victuals. Miss Mary issued invitations to a number of prominent men, soliciting their aid in the furtherance of her object, and asking their presence at a dinner to be given by her. Among others invited was Mark Twain. The letter addressed to the latter gentleman was long, covering a number of closely written pages, and after giving a history of the contest which was being waged in religious circles in that city, stated that the writer had been favored with visions and inspirations from heaven, by which she was told that the only way to settle the matter was in the manner proposed by her. In answer, Mr. Clemens sent the following letter containing his regrets, and stating his reasons for not being present:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD, CONN., Feb. 21st, 1880.—Well, Mary, my friend, you must think I am a slow sort of correspondent, and the truth is, I am. You must forgive this fault; it is one which I have never been able to correct. I am a pretty busy person, and a very lazy one; therefore I am apt to let letters lie a long time before I answer them. However, once a year, on or about Washington's birthday, I rake together all the unanswered letters and reply to them. I meant to answer the letter you sent me some weeks ago, but waited for Washington's birthday to come. Write to me whenever you feel like it, Mary, but don't you feel hurt if I keep you waiting till the next Washington's birthday for an answer. I do not feel half so much hurried when I have a year to answer a letter in as I do when people expect a reply right away. I only send money to people once a year, too, and that is on Washington's birthday, so you see if I had answered you earlier I could not have sent you the five dollars until now.

Take this check which I enclose, and go to the bank with Mr. Miller, and he will tell the banker you are the person named on it, and will give you the money, or if you choose, you can mail the check (after writing your name on the back of it) to Messrs. George P. Bissell & Co., Hartford, Conn., telling them to send to you a postal order, and they will send it by return mail. I think your idea of getting those clergymen together at a dinner table is a very good one. They will have to put up with each other's society a good long time in heaven, so they may as well begin to get used to it here. Besides, I think, as you said, that their coming together in a friendly way will have a good influence on other people. I am much obliged to you for asking me to be present and carve the turkey, but I must not go. Always when I carve a turkey I swear a little. (All people swear to themselves—but I swear right out. I never could help it, though it has cost me many a pang.) I think a person ought not to swear where clergymen are, unless they provoke him. Well, I couldn't be there anyway, because I have to stay at home and stick close to my work, else this nation would become so ignorant in a little while that it would break one's heart to look at it. No, you, and I have our separate duties in this world, Mary—your line is to humanize the clergy, and mine is to instruct the public. Let us not interfere with each other's functions. I have a most kindly sympathy toward you and your work, and perhaps that is a better contribution than my own presence would be. You say "Pity me"—indeed I do, and that is a true word. I wish I could tell you whether those were genuine visions and inspirations you have writ-

ten me about, but I can not be absolutely certain. They seem to me to be just like all the visions and inspirations I have ever heard of, and so I think you may rest assured that yours are as perfectly true and genuine and trustworthy as any that have ever happened in the world. Now let that comfort you, Mary, let that give peace to your troubled spirit, and believe me your friend.

S. L. CLEMENS,
(Mark Twain.)

A Pueblo Belle.

There passes my window at this moment, writes Mrs. Lew Wallace, a young Indian girl from Tesuque, a village eight miles north of this place—Santa Fe, New Mexico. Like the beloved one of the Canticles, she is dark but comely, and without saddle or bridle sits astride her little burro in cool defiance of city prejudice. Always gayly dressed, with ready nod and a quick smile, showing the whitest teeth, we call her Bright Alfaratta, in memory of the sweet singer of the blue Juniata; though the interpreter says her true name is Poy-ye, the Rising Moon. Neither of us understand a word of the other's language, so I beckon to her. She springs to the ground with the supple grace of an antelope and comes to me, holding out a thin, slender hand, the tint of Florentine bronze, seats herself on the window-sill, and in the shade of the portal we converse in what young lovers are pleased to call eloquent silence. Her donkey will not stray, but lingers patiently about, like the lamb he resembles in face and temper, and nibbles the scant grass which fringes the acequia. I think his mistress must be a lady of high degree, perhaps the cacique's daughter, she wears such a holiday air unusual with such women, and is so richly adorned with beads of strung periwinkles. She wears loose moccasins, "shoes of silence," which cannot hide the delicate and shapely outline of her feet, leggings of deer-skin, a skirt reaching below the knee, and a cotton chemise. Her head has no covering but glossy jet-black hair, newly washed with amole, banded in front, and "is tricked off behind the ears in the shape of a wheel which resembles the handle of a cup"—the distinguished fashion of maidenhood now as it was more than 300 years ago. Tied by a scarlet cord across her forehead is a pendant of opaline shell, the lining of a muscle shell, doubtless the very ornament called precious pearl and opal which dazzled the eyes and stirred the covetous hearts of the first conquerors. Our Pueblo belle wraps about her drapery such as Castenada's maiden never dreamed of—a flowing mantle which has followed the march of progress. Thrown across the left shoulder and drawn under her bare and beautiful right arm is a handsome red blanket, with the letters U. S. woven in the center.

How to Keep Chickens.

Scientific Californian.

Keep a record of your work. Do not burden your mind with trying to remember either your success or failure. If you make an experiment, record it, so that you can trace it up for reference if it is a success; if it is a failure, you can protect yourself against it another time. Do not allow the bones from the table to be thrown into the dust heap, or lie around the yard; throw them into the fire, burn them a little, crush and give them to your fowls. If bread is burned, or anything else that is cooked in the house, do not throw it away, but use it as charcoal for your birds. If they have been obliged to run in the orchard or meadow to pick up their living as they can and feeding on what they could get, their eggs and flesh are likely to taste; feeding charcoal in any shape will remedy the evil.

That it pays to look under the bed before you retire, if you are a woman, received fresh evidence in Watertown, Conn., recently. A young lady took a peep and was rewarded with a view of a man's boots. She immediately called her father, who promptly responded with a gun and a club, and catching hold of the rascal's feet, brought his own boots to light. His daughter had worn them on a berry expedition and had thrown them there on getting home.

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